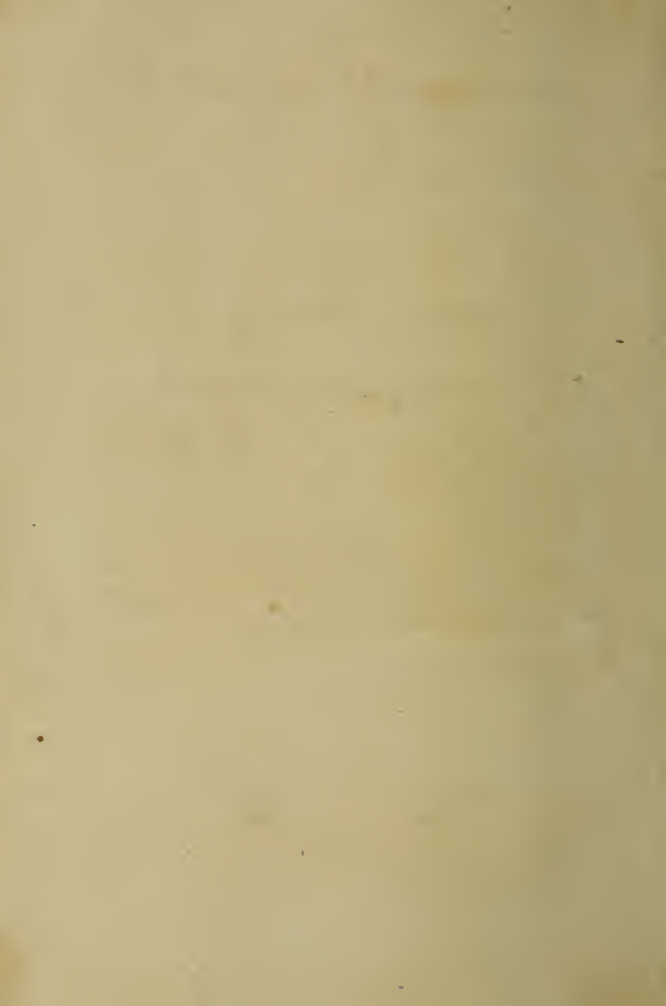


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THE BROKEN CIRCLE.—SEE PAGE 19.

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CHRISTIAN LOVE

CONTRASTED

WITH THE LOVE OF THE WORLD:

IN

An Epistolary Narrative.

BY MRS. M. H. MAXWELL.

EDITED BY DANIEL P. KIDDER.

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PREFACE.

REV. J. C. THOMAS.

It is a matter of no small import, that the Divine principle of love stands first in the enumeration of the "fruits of the Spirit." Love, the first emotion of the regenerated heart, is the sacred badge which, throughout life's pilgrimage, distinguishes the Christian believer from the unbelieving worldling, and is in itself a test so sure, that none need fear an implicit reliance upon its faithfulness; yet, so *simple*, that it can be understood and applied by the weak and unlearned.

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The following letters are but a feeble

illustration of this Divine principle, it being one which above all others, language has ever been powerless to describe. Yet, as they are the natural, unadorned expression of the heart's emotion, they may be of use in pointing the reader to the only right source of love, and of showing the heart without rest, until its love is fixed on God.

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CHRISTIAN LOVE.

LETTER I.

JULIA TO MARTHA.

DEAR MARTHA,—I suppose that change makes for itself a pathway even across the prairies of the “far west;” and having heard nothing from you for months, I have feared, that with you, as with me, death has been walking side by side with love. In your last letter you spoke of a sick brother, of your mother’s declining health, and begged to know how I have borne the weight of life since parents, brothers, and sisters have passed away. Alas! my dear friend, I have sometimes found it a *weight* grievous to be borne. Is it, indeed, five years since your family left Linden? Well, if time is to be measured by experience, they should be

many times that number to me ; for what have I not learned of life's uncertainties during that time ?

You say, Martha, that memory dwells fondly upon by-gone days, upon the gleeful hours spent with me around your own, and my father's fireside. You thank Heaven that you have been spared the dreadful sight of the funeral pall in this home of joyful echoes ; but, my dear friend, where in all this broad, green earth will you find a spot where echoes of laughter, of merry voices, and of song will not die away ? There was no echo here for many an hour, save the low and mournful chime of the cricket upon the deserted hearth. You remember my noble brother Herbert, and ask if I have never heard tidings of him. Yes ; I heard that he was laid in his hammock beneath the blue waves of the sea. These mournful tidings came to us the very day upon which our beautiful little Imogene died. The double sorrow hastened mother to her grave, and Flora, our gay but frail summer flower, soon followed. Then, Martha, how I clung to my father, and he

to me ! His cough, which had for years been a familiar sound, suddenly became a note of terror. How I watched his sad face, and tried to be to him, not only the same happy Julia, but *mother*, and Herbert, and Flora, and Imogene too ! But it was all in vain. The *neighbors* saw that he changed daily ; then how could I be blind to the sorrowful fact ! As a last resource I sought relief in prayer. I read with a fixed and earnest attention the life of Jesus Christ during his sojourn upon earth. I studied the characters upon whom he lavished his tender sympathies, whom he pitied and relieved. Then, with renewed importunity, I sought his aid ; and imploringly asked if he was not still the same. I know not, Martha, how large a blessing would at that time have been bestowed had it been said to me as to the suppliant of old, "*according to thy faith* be it unto thee ;" for by a close examination of my motives at that time, I am led to think that prayer, as a *dernier resort*, is then not of faith, but merely an experiment. If thou *canst* do anything, have mercy upon us.

There are human hearts which compel even mercy itself to take their last prop, before they will loose their hold on earth. Such was mine.

My father failed from day to day, and before the autumn frost I laid him beside mother and Flora, with dear little Imogene sleeping at their feet. Then I was *alone*, and O what loneliness! What a chasm is made when death takes but *one* from the family fold! But here all were gone, and a timid, shrinking child was left alone. You remember, Martha, the revival of religion (in which many of our school-mates participated) during the last winter of your stay in Linden. You remember, too, how we talked together of the things that concern our everlasting peace; for both of us were at that time awakened by the Spirit of truth. Can you call to mind our vain excuses, dear Martha; how we deemed our earthly prospects too bright and joyous to be dimmed by religious restraints? How little did I then know the true nature of religion, and its vital importance to my happiness! The arms of love, ready to infold

a guilty world in their kind embrace, were extended to me ; they offered to shield me from the storm, and be my hiding place from the windy tempest : but I chose rather to trust the world. My mountain was standing sure. What need had I of a covert ? God in his mercy has showed me this need. My dear friend, when “ the rain descended, and the floods beat, and the winds blew,” great was the fall of my house upon the sand ; but the privilege of building again, and upon a more sure foundation was not denied me.

“ I built again, but on a *rock*—

The ‘ Rock of Ages,’ firm and sure.”

The long winter following my father’s death was nearly gone, and I had determined with the opening spring to seek out my sister Emma ; for the new love which had sprung up in my once desolate heart, rather increased the fondness with which I thought of my only surviving sister. Emma was our eldest. She had married and moved to the South while I was as yet but a little child. Once, only, had she visited her home, and that for a short time ; but for

months previous to my father's death, we had heard nothing from her. During the winter I had written several times, but received no answers : yet my heart yearned to see her ; and trusting in the protecting care of my Heavenly Father, I was about ready for my lonely journey. It was a beautiful evening in the early part of May, and I was to leave my home on the morrow. That dear old lady, Mrs. Morse, who has recently gone to her reward in heaven, was with me. We had been talking of the light that shineth in darkness—of the covenant-bow set in the cloud ; how love, which is the heart's food, often becomes like the waters of Marah, because it is drawn from earthly fountains : and then, at her request, I told how, in losing all, I gained an infinite good ; that my heart, wounded and torn, found for a time nothing to which its languishing fibres could cling. It wasted with burning thirst till faith came, and smote the rock of the desert ; then the waters gushed out, they ran into the dry places like a river, and this world, which was become a barren and dreary waste, suddenly changed to "a

place of broad rivers and streams." If you have tasted this living water, my dear Martha, you will understand me, though I use the figurative language of Scripture ; if not, I would tell you plainly, that, bowed down with earthly sorrow, weary and heavy-laden, I came to Jesus Christ. The language of my broken heart was this :—

" For love I sigh, for love I pant."

And what was the kind response? " Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat. Yea, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

I came, Martha ; and, to my inexpressible joy, found, that in losing every earthly trust, I had found my God. The blessed Spirit of adoption, sent forth into my heart by the Holy Ghost, was sealed and made certain to my faith by the infallible test of love, which is the first fruit of that Spirit. I was not obliged to be thus explicit with my old friend—she knew at a glance the sure evidence of adoption ; and, as we talked together of its saving, healing, puri-

fyng power, our hearts burned within us. We were just raising a song of praise to God, when there was a low knock at the door. A carriage had stopped at the gate; and, in the light of the moon, which shone brightly upon the piazza, I saw a gentleman with a little girl.

"Is Mr. Hood at home?" he inquired, as I opened the door. I told him that my father was in his grave; that none of the family was left but myself and an absent sister. "And you," said he, in a trembling voice; "you are Flora." "No," I replied; "Flora is dead—I am Julia." "And I," said he, "am your sister Emma's husband; and this little girl is our daughter."

I clasped the child in my arms, and we entered the house together. Mother Morse had placed a lamp upon the stand, and I saw in its light that my brother-in-law looked pale and wan.

I hastened to prepare some refreshment; and as we sat down at the table, I ventured to inquire for my sister. He looked up with an expression of the deepest grief, as he replied, "She is numbered with those

whom you have lost, sister Julia.”* “O, not lost,” said I; my faith kindling at the thought: “not *lost*, my brother, but gone before.” “It is a pleasant dream,” murmured my brother-in-law; “I did not rob her of it, poor thing, nor will I you; but life has no such dreams for me. It is all a black, horrid reality.” Saying this, he clasped his hand upon his pale forehead, and remained silent. I knew by this that faith had not spanned his dark sky with its beautiful bow of promise; and that the poor bleeding heart-strings, torn and riven, were groaning with deep complaint, but still recoiling from the only balm by which they could be healed.

The child sat with her mild blue eyes resting upon her father. At last, tears rolled over her fair young cheek, and she broke into a gentle sob. “Don’t cry, my Daisy,” said her father, wiping her tears; “here is aunt Julia—you will love her, dearest. She is your mother’s sister.”

The child now turned her sweet face upon me, and as I folded her in my arms

* See Frontispiece.

once more, and she returned my warm caress, I trembled, lest my love should wander from its source, and again be left bleeding in the dust.

That night, Martha, I knew something of the joy of grief. It was a wakeful night; but it was sweet communing with my heart and God. I felt that my Heavenly Father, in his boundless love for me, had respect to my heart's earthly wants. He had sent me that fair young creature to love. How I blessed his name! and as the moonlight fell upon her pillow, covered with bright golden locks, my heart seemed bursting with gratitude and joy. The next morning I saw that my brother-in-law assumed an appearance of cheerfulness and hope. He told me that, by a freak of fortune, he had suddenly lost a large estate. This, he said, would not have greatly depressed his feelings,—for he had the means at hand for making another fortune quite as ample,—but the death of his wife had quite unnerved him. He paced the floor for a time, and I was shocked at the haggard, care-worn expression of his countenance.

At last, resuming the conversation, he said, "Were it not for that child, I would fold my arms, and look upon life's race as run; for, what has been the end of my striving thus far? Wealth and friends were the prize at the end of my race, and both have fled. Nothing is left me but that one heart's jewel, and for her I must struggle on." I could not help asking the poor man for what he would struggle now? "For gold," he replied; "if man must chase a shadow all his life long, let it at least be one of glittering wings."

Here he attempted a smile. My heart was pained for him, Martha. I tried to convince him that money was not the principal want of the soul. I told him, in the simple language of a "babe in Christ," how the aching void in my own heart had been filled. But it was *too* simple for him. He smiled complacently as on the evening before; murmured something about *pleasant dreams* for women and children,—“poor hearts,” they would break without something of the kind. Break, indeed! I felt as though mine would break in view of such

contempt for the cross of Christ. But he changed the subject; said that he had an only sister in the city of B——, who was a widow, with but one child. Perhaps it would be well for his little Daisy to spend a part of her time there, in case her aunt desired it. I was pained at this suggestion. He perceived it, and said that his only motive for such an arrangement, was the idea that his daughter might have greater advantages in the city than here; but he would leave the choice with her. After three years' residence with me, she might visit her aunt Portman, and decide with whom she would live during the remaining years of his absence.

More than two years of that time has already expired. During this year, Daisy has received several letters from her aunt, who seems to consider her choice of living in the city as certain. The dear child shrinks from the thought of leaving me, but a few months' residence with her fashionable aunt and cousin may convert both Linden and aunt Julia into objects of indifference. But I leave it with the Lord; I know that his

love can find a balm for earth's deepest wounds. I am trying to teach my dear Daisy the way to Him. If she can only drink from the pure fountain before she is tempted to taste the impure streams; or, in other words, if she will love her God before she learns to love the world, how much suffering she will escape!

I have written you a long letter, dear Martha; and, as you desire, given you a sketch of my history for the last five years. Will you write in return, and allow me the happiness of keeping a more regular and frequent correspondence with my early friend?

Your affectionate JULIA.

LETTER II.

MARTHA TO JULIA.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I begin to be in love with what is *long*; so your long letter was thrice welcome. The truth is, my dear Julia, I am shocked in looking at past years and noting their fleetness, at past hopes,

past joys, past pleasures, and feeling how short-lived they are. If there is anything *long* under the sun, I would be glad to know it. I can tell you of three long things—only three, in this Western world; namely, long grass, long snakes, and long sermons: all else is short, as in Linden.

But Julia, my dear friend, I had not dreamed that so full a cup of sorrow had been meted out to you. I had heard that your mother, and Herbert, and the lovely little Imogene were no more; but I had hoped that your father, and Flora, and Emma were still alive. But they, too, are gone; and from this waste of heart's love, from the broken fragments of earthly hopes, you have framed a *creed*. Pardon me, Julia; if this curious creed could afford you one ray of light for your midnight darkness, I would let it alone: but I see that it does not. You look upon the Great, the Wise, and the Good, as standing ready to dash every cup of earthly happiness from your lips; your shrinking heart is in perpetual terror of offending Him. I cannot receive such a doctrine, Julia. Is there anything wrong in

loving what is lovable—parents, sisters, brothers, friends? God, our Heavenly Father, knows well that we cannot live without such objects of affection; but how are we blessed in their bestowment, if the heart must be forever guarded in its love, guarded lest its doting fondness provoke its Maker to jealousy? This language may seem irreverent, but I have recently been vexed exceedingly by this self-same thing. You remember my sister Carrie. She had a little daughter, “one bird of the prairie;” one of the brightest, most beautiful creatures that ever gladdened a human heart. Well, she was taken violently sick, her life was placed in the hands of an ignorant quack; as might have been expected, that precious life was thrown away. What a relief would it have been to my wounded feelings, if, after this dreadful sacrifice, we could have laid our bird in sorrowing silence upon her green earth-bed! But no; custom would count such a thing as strange. We must have a religious service. Then came the sacrilegious charging of her death upon Him “who doeth all

things well;" and because motive must be assigned for a deed like this, it was shown that *human love*—too fondly, too lavishly poured out upon this precious little child—provoked the stroke of death.

Could I believe this, Julia, and believe, too, that God is love? Could I believe it, and at the same time remember Him who, with more than human love, took little children in His arms and blessed them? No, I could not; and, for your own heart's peace, dear Julia, do not you. I would love little Daisy, without any fear of offending against Heaven by so doing. You will never be condemned for setting your heart upon a motherless little child. I hope and pray that you may not lose her; but, if you do, find another object, and keep yourself alive by keeping something to love.

I understand the figurative language of Scripture far better than the plain language of my friend Julia. I know how the parched ground of an earthly desert becomes a pool to me. It is by believing that God is love; not that he is a jealous God. And though I know not what you mean, dear Julia, by the "Spirit of adoption," I

am not wholly without religious emotions ; and if, as you say, *love* is the first fruit of the Spirit, and the seal of adoption, perhaps I may claim a Christian hope. I have always loved the works of God ; and now, more than ever, from having little society, save that of my own family, I have more leisure to muse upon such things, and such musings are most salutary and grateful. I like to spend evening after evening in delighted contemplation of the starry heavens ; and as their beautiful rays fall upon this ocean of waving grass, I often think of the innumerable company, which no man can number : for I know and feel, Julia, that this fair green earth of grass and flowers, with its fairer canopy of suns and stars, is but a faint type of the spirit's home. I believe that the soul is chastened and purified by such contemplations, and, thus refined from its grosser nature, may become "meet for an inheritance with the saints in light."

I rejoice to say, that the health of my dear mother has greatly improved, and for this I am devoutly thankful. My invalid brother is now absent from his home. I

must give you credit for more strength of soul than I possess, dear Julia. Sorrow like yours would draw the life-blood from my heart. A frequent and regular correspondence would be highly gratifying to me, as in other days. Your friend,

MARTHA.

LETTER III.

DAISY TO HER AUNT JULIA.

MY DEAR AUNT,—I promised to write very soon, and so I will; but it will be a curious letter. I have seen and heard a great many things, and ought to find enough to write about; but, when I think of these things separately, it seems to me, that they will look silly upon paper. You told me, aunt Julia, to write my thoughts and feelings; how I was impressed by the new objects around me. Then I must begin with my first night in the city. When the coach, man stopped at aunt Portman's door, and I saw such a large, splendid house, and two servants waiting to show me in, I had a

kind of glad feeling, that my aunt had things so nice. In the hall, which is hung around with handsome paintings, I met aunt Portman : she kissed me, but seemed in a great hurry to get me off up-stairs, and in following her, I saw that Belinda, who came after with my bandbox, and Jeffrey, who carried my trunk, looked at each other and laughed. When aunt Portman and I were alone, she said, "Your riding-dress is a thought too long, my dear ; you had better get it off as soon as possible:" but this was not the end of our trouble ; for in unlocking my trunk, it was found, that I had not a single dress that was not a thought out of the way somehow. Aunt seemed very much vexed, though, she said, that it was no more than she expected ; people in the country had no taste, and knew nothing of the fashions. After looking my dresses all over, she told me to put on that blue muslin ; and I must tell you the truth, aunt Julia, though I had thought so much of that dress when it was made, and was afraid that I should sin against God by such a foolish pride, yet, now I felt

ashamed of it, and all because aunt Portman said, that it was a thought too high in the neck. I am sure that I never heard so many *thoughts* on dresses before.

There was so much said about dress, that I expected to meet company at tea, and was quite surprised when aunt told me, that we should take our tea in a quiet way, quite alone. Josephine was engaged with mantua-makers in preparing for a ball, after these the hair-dressers would come; so that she would have time to eat nothing more than a piece of cake with a glass of wine. All this time I had not seen my cousin Josephine. Aunt Portman spoke English at the tea table; but I understood nothing of half she said. She told me that she was delighted to find me of a light complexion, with blue eyes, for I should look *divinely* with pearls, which were her favorite ornament; that Josephine was magnificent with rubies, but being a brunette, with a brilliant dark eye, quite out-shone pearls.

Then she talked of "good taste," as being an "infinite blessing," and said, that she knew some young ladies, really fright-

ful of themselves, who were superb when dressed. I could not understand all this, aunt Julia. I had heard the words divine, magnificent, and superb, but never heard them applied to *girls* before. After tea, aunt said, that she would like to do something to amuse me, for it would be dull to spend a whole evening alone. I told her that I had spent many an evening with nobody but aunt Julia, and had never found it dull; that we knit or sewed, talked, read, or sung by turns, and were often surprised to find our evening gone so soon. At this aunt Portman laughed, and said, that she would endure two years at Linden herself, if she could by that means learn the art of being happy alone. Then she tried to show me something about the game of chess: but I grew sleepy; overturned the *bishop*, and nodded at the *knight*. "I see that you are tired," said aunt, "and should retire. Josephine is getting very nervous, and can sleep but little after a ball; she would like to have you occupy the same room with her." I felt a little sorry for this; for I couldn't help thinking, that if I needed a

place by myself at Linden, I should certainly want one here ; but I made no objection, and aunt went with me to a very handsome chamber, which seemed in great disorder. The rich carpet was strewed with curl-papers, broken perfume-bottles, shreds of lace, gauze, and satin, while the toilets, bureaux, chairs, and couches were covered with colored prints of ladies in all manners of dress ; and with these I saw a great many yellow-covered magazines, and books handsomely bound and gilded. These reminded me of the beautiful Bible presented by my dear aunt Julia, and of my promise to read from it every night. I remembered it was left in the pocket of my riding dress, and asked permission to fetch it from aunt Portman's room. She told me that she had already given the riding-dress to Belinda, as I should have no further use for so unfashionable a thing, and had not thought of first searching the pockets ; but it was no matter, Bibles were plenty enough ; so she kissed me, and saying that she would send Josephine's maid, to help me to undress, bade me a good night :

I felt a little vexed about the Bible, because it was a present from you ; but then, I thought, perhaps it would do the poor girl good : and after the maid was gone, I searched the room for another ; but though aunt said Bibles were plenty enough, I could find nothing but magazines, souvenirs, romances, and books of poetry. So I sat down and repeated a chapter. But how confused I felt ! You know, aunt Julia, that you told me long ago, how, as I grew older, it would be difficult to find prayers written out expressly for me ; I might feel in my heart wants that were not expressed in written prayers, and then I should be glad to know that I might come with my own language to a throne of grace. I began to feel those wants of the heart, long before I left Linden ; and had sometimes felt greatly relieved by praying with thoughts and language of my own. I ought to have told you all this long ago, that you might have explained to me what I could not understand. When I first began to pray in my own language it was very pleasant. In the dark, stormy nights, when the wind blew,

and the rain beat upon our snug parlor-windows, I loved to go by myself, and ask God to take care of my dear father. I knew that his Spirit moved upon the dark waters, and that he could command the raging ocean to be still. So I trusted in Him, dear aunt Julia, and was not afraid. And I have prayed for you a great many times, when you were sick, and when you were sad, and while I thought myself a pretty good girl. It was an easy way of having my wants supplied. But, after a time, I began to think more of what you had told me about the great love with which Jesus had loved me, and that he asked my love as a small return. Then I saw, aunt Julia, that I was not so good after all. I should have thought myself very ungrateful not to love you, when you had shown so much love for me; but I had never once thought it ungrateful not to love the Lord Jesus Christ, though he had done more for me than my aunt Julia, or any other friend *could* do. I had loved you so well, that I tried hard to please you. I had often been happy in giving up

my own wishes for your sake ; but I had never once asked, whether my ways pleased the Lord, and somehow I didn't want to, neither do I now. I know that it is ungrateful, and I am ashamed to pray now as I used to do ; but I must pray somehow, and, perhaps, you will think it best for me to use my old prayers again. I won't pretend, aunt Julia, that I think this is right ; but you will tell me what *is* right, I am sure. I was going to tell you, that after repeating the chapter I tried to repeat a prayer ; but somehow, what aunt Portman said about my looking divinely in pearls, would come into my mind, and I went to bed without knowing what I had prayed for. It must have been nearly morning when Josephine came home, and as I awoke suddenly and saw her, I thought that aunt was not greatly out of the way in calling her *magnificent*. I never saw any one dressed so richly before ; and when she stood there all glittering in jewels, as she was scolding the poor little maid for being so stupid, and sleepy, I thought of queens and princesses. After a time she

came to my bed, said she was sorry to disturb me, but begged to know if I was in the habit of sleeping after two o'clock in the morning. I told her, that I had never been in the habit of lying in bed awake, that I usually found sleep when I found my pillow, and was not often up before the sun. Josephine sighed, and said, that it would not be so with me when I began to go out of evenings. After a long time the poor sleepy maid was dismissed, and my cousin was in bed, but she seemed very restless, and at last I thought that she was crying. It seemed scarcely possible; but, on listening, I found that she was really crying: so I spoke very kindly, and asked her if she was sick. She said, no; her head ached shockingly, but then she was not sick. She begged me to come and lie beside her, so I went; and then she began to tell me of something that had vexed her very much, that Amelia Basil, whom she hated above all things, had been the star of the evening. I was so sleepy that I heard but half the story.

Aunt and I took our breakfast alone, for

Josephine is not expected to rise until noon. I hope that you will write to me often, dear aunt Julia, and please ask Emily and Mary Motley to write. Give my love to all the girls, and tell them that I shall not forget the sewing circle nor the Bible class. You told me to write always, whether I am happy or not. I am not really unhappy, aunt Julia, but I feel very restless. Is it not nearly time for us to hear from father? you know that he promised to write. *You* won't forget to write, dear aunt, will you?

Yours affectionately,

DAISY.

LETTER IV.

JULIA TO MARTHA.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot allow you to think that my heart is in perpetual terror from any apprehension of evil from any source. I have no fear that my Heavenly Father will dash any cup of earthly happiness from my lips, unless he sees in

that cup a mixture poisonous to my future blessedness. You ask, dear Martha, where is the crime of loving what is lovable—parents, brothers, sisters, and friends, whom God has given us, because the heart must have objects upon which to lavish its warm affection?

About two months before my sister Flora died, she planted a beautiful vine in our yard. After she had been in her grave for a short time, I saw that this vine, whose tendency was upward, had wandered from its parent bed, and was twining itself around an adjacent tree. Then its growth was rapid: but that it might be supported in its rapid growth, I saw that nature had provided tendrils to twine themselves around the branches; and thus supported and blessed, the vine increased in strength. But there came a change. One tendril after another waxed strong, and outran the branches. Then their tendency was *downward*. The strength of the vine was wasted upon these vagrant tendrils, till, at last, withered and feeble, it relaxed its hold, and followed them to the earth. What

was the lesson? The home of the soul is with its God,—

“It upward tends to his abode,
To rest in his embrace.”

But because the soul is brought down and linked to an earthly mold, God has given it earthly props to sustain and assist its heaven-born love. The heart's fibres twine themselves around earthly objects. But what if the tendrils become too strong for the vine? What if the streams waste the fountain? Or, in other words, what if the soul is retarded in its heavenward course, and at last goes out after its earthly affections, like them, leaning upon broken reeds?

You see the result, Martha, for you know and acknowledge how all of earth is passing away. I cannot deny that God is Love. I feel it at this very hour; but while my heart rejoices in this assurance, it does not recoil at the thought of godly jealousy. Of what is our Heavenly Father jealous, Martha, if not of our own happiness? Can our love add anything to *his*

happiness, to his excellence and glory? It cannot: and were his thoughts our thoughts, and his ways our ways, such love would be to him a worthless thing. But it is not; for the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity stoops to *ask* our love: and all because he loves us. Our happiness is dear to the heart of Infinite Holiness. He knows, as we can never know, the nature of the soul; where is the centre of its happiness, and its native home.

When my dear father was lying upon his bed of pain, he sometimes asked, though with apparent submission,

“When will the moment come,
When I shall lay my armor by,
And be with Christ at home?”

I once asked him how a world unknown and invisible to mortal eyes could seem like *home*. “Ah, my daughter,” said he, “the eye of faith has long rested upon that far-off country, as upon my native land; and, as tie after tie has broken here, they have united with and strengthened those which are drawing me to that other shore.

I shall not be a stranger there amid the objects of my most ardent love." And thus he died, casting off the world which he had ever worn as a loose garment. His glad, free spirit went joyfully home,—

"A home in heaven, when our friends are fled,
To the cheerless gloom of the moldering dead :
He went in hope, on the promise given,
He will meet them there in our home in heaven."

I remember your sister Carrie very well, and remember, too, that in the revival, to which I alluded in my last letter, she professedly gave her heart to God. If she has held fast her profession to this sad hour, she will not mourn her "Bud of the Prairie" as a sacrifice to ignorance.

I do not say this to reproach you, dear Martha. Far be it from me to believe that our friends are always taken from this world by the design of Providence. Doubtless, many of mature years go uncalled for into eternity, with many little children who might live to bless the world. But the promise standeth sure, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Our Heavenly Father, doubtless, sometimes

takes little children from their parents ; but it must be for a purpose worthy of his character, and faith still affirms that "He doeth all things well."

You cannot have forgotten Mrs. Jarvis ; she has recently buried her fifth and last child, and to my own mind, it is a most affecting proof of divine benevolence. She never regarded her children in the light of blessings, lent from God. She has never welcomed them to this world with a loving, grateful heart. And when I think of her capricious, fretful manners, of the suffering which tender, sensitive childhood must have endured therefrom, I understand why the Great Shepherd has folded the little lambs to his bosom. He loved them better than did the mother.

I should like to spend a moonlight evening with you upon the prairie ; but if the waving grass reminded *me* of the "innumerable company of heaven," I should remind Martha that they were not refined and made meet for heaven by a poetic contemplation of the moon and stars shining upon an "ocean of grass." No, my dear friend,

they came up out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the *blood of the Lamb*. I would not rob you of a well-grounded religious hope, Martha ; but do not forget that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid. I would not that my dear friend should build her house upon the sand. Love for the works of God is not a sufficient proof that we have tasted the first-fruit of the Spirit. Such love or admiration is often professed by those who are indifferent, if not strongly opposed to the Spirit of truth.

But I will tell you, dear Martha, how you may know of the foundation for your religious hope. Ask yourself these questions : Have I acknowledged the claims made by my Creator upon my love ; and feeling that these claims have not been met, that I have never loved Him with all my mind, might, and strength, have I repented this wrong, and trusting in Christ as my Advocate, and his death as my atonement, have I sought pardon through him, and have I sure evidence of that pardon in the change of my heart's affection ? Do I love

the people of God? Am I willing to bear the reproach of Christ?

If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, my dear friend, there is no longer conjecture, but joyful *certainty* in your case. You have entered *by the door* into the sheepfold, and may henceforth reckon yourself one of the Saviour's flock.

My dear Daisy has gone to B——. I love her, and mean, by the help of God, to watch over her present and eternal happiness, with the kind jealousy wherewith my Heavenly Father watches me.

Write soon, dear Martha, and tell me frankly all about yourself. With kindest love to your family, I remain your sincere friend,

JULIA.

LETTER V.

MARY MOTLEY TO DAISY.

MY DEAR DAISY,—Your kind aunt Julia came into our sewing circle yesterday, and read your letter. How we laughed over

the short-comings of your Linden dresses ; “a thought too long, a thought too high, and a thought too narrow!” I am sure that city people must be very *thoughtful*. But, Daisy dear, you will need a new dictionary. Webster would be a Hottentot in the city of B——. Your Aunt Portman should give you a catalogue of words with definitions, after this fashion :—

Divine—A young lady with pearls.

Magnificent—A brunette with rubies.

Frightful—A lady in dishabille.

Superb—The same, tastefully dressed.

Taste—An infinite blessing, &c.

We all hope that your visit will be short at B—— ; we want you here, Daisy, and we *need* you, too. In the sewing circle, in the singing school, and the Bible class, we need your help. Your Aunt Julia looks lovely. You *cannot* find any one to love as you love her, Daisy, without you come to be so wicked as to love yourself supremely. She read to us what you said about prayer, and seemed very anxious. I have felt just so, for some time. The trouble with us, Daisy, is this ; we have not

a heart to love God. We ought to do as cousin Louisa has done. It was only a week ago last Sabbath that Mr. Jones was talking to the Bible class about loving God; he said nothing, but what we had heard a great many times before,—that we could never be happy until we were Christians, &c. But Louisa, though she has always been very careless, sat and cried, as though her heart would break. Mr. Jones begged her to tell us why she was so distressed, and, after some urging, she said that she had loved everything better than she loved the Lord Jesus Christ; and now, when she thought of how much he had endured for her, how long he had waited for her heart, she felt grieved and ashamed. Mr. Jones asked her if she was then willing to give her heart to the Saviour? She said, “O yes, she wished that he would take it; but she had made it so vile, that she feared he would not.” I cannot tell you all that was said, but Louisa was invited to the inquiry-meeting that evening. She went, and spent the night with me. When we were in our room alone, she told me to go to bed;

that she could not think of sleep while her sins were unforgiven. I pitied her very much, but felt tired, and soon fell asleep, and slept until morning. When I awoke, Louisa was sleeping very quietly; there was a tear upon her cheek, and as I was wiping it off, she opened her eyes and smiled. I felt a little funny, and asked her if she had come to be a Christian. She made no answer, but got up and dressed herself, and wanted me to go with her to Mr. Jones. I begged her to wait until after breakfast, but she said very decidedly, "No, Mary, this question must be decided before I eat." I felt really ashamed, and considered it a *thought* too early for a call; but Louisa always ruled me, you know. So off we started. Mr. Jones had just kindled a fire in the keeping-room, and all the rest of the family were in bed. Louisa had always before seemed afraid of Mr. Jones, and had often said that she didn't like him—(you know she was sometimes reprov'd for laughing in the class)—but this morning she caught his hand eagerly as soon as it was offered, and asked him if she might speak to

him just a minute. He smiled very pleasantly, and sat down with us by the fire, while Louisa told her story in this way:—
“I felt dreadfully, Mr. Jones, after I came home last night, and told Mary that she might go to bed, for I could not sleep. Then I sat down to think of my past life; but the more I looked at myself, the worse I felt. It seemed to me that my sins were sinking me beyond the reach of hope. Then I remembered what was said at the inquiry-meeting about looking to Jesus. So I knelt again, but could not pray; language was all gone. My heart seemed struggling to cast off its dreadful weight; and, presently, in looking to Jesus, that weight was gone. I felt alarmed, at first, but was so weary with my long struggle, that I fell asleep. What shall I do now, Mr. Jones; my distress is gone?” Mr. Jones was silent for a time, and then said, “If you were to select a company, with whom you would like to spend this day, Louisa, whom among the villagers, would you choose?”

And now, Daisy, I am sure that you would never guess whom Louisa honored by

a selection. It was not you, nor I, nor Helen Bates, nor Harry and Tim Saunders; but it was Mr. Jones, and your Aunt Julia. That was well enough; but the queerest is to come yet. It was old Mrs. Ames, that very pious old lady, who wears such a plain bonnet; Mary Willis, who keeps a school at the poor-house; old Mr. Crocker, who prayed in the dancing school, and broke it up. Louisa was perfectly serious; but it was too much for me—I laughed till I was ashamed. Mr. Jones smiled; but he looked rather tearfully, too, and asked Louisa what she would choose as a theme for conversation. She said, immediately, that she would like to talk all day long of Jesus Christ, and his wonderful love for sinners. The tears now ran down Mr. Jones's cheeks. He took Louisa's hand in his; and, kneeling down, thanked God that he had heard prayer—that one member of his class had been brought into the Saviour's fold. Then he prayed for the rest of us, and for the absent one—that, of course, was you, Daisy; and if you had heard his prayers, you would have thought

that something more than *pearls* were needed to make you divine. He prayed that you might not become a lover of pleasure more than of God. Louisa said, Amen, to this.

When we rose from prayer, Louisa asked if the new love which she felt in her heart was a proof that her sins were forgiven. Mr. Jones told her that it was, and said, "I will explain it to you, my dear child. When you were wandering away from your God, his Spirit followed you. You sometimes wished to flee from its presence, but felt that you could not; yet you closed your heart against its mild entreaties, and would have none of its reproofs. At last you stopped to think, and opened your eyes to see the vile ingratitude of your sinful heart. You tried to cast out the idols which had usurped your Saviour's throne; but they were too strong for you, you were compelled to yield the strife to Him. Then the work was soon accomplished. He cast out his foes, and bade his long-insulted Spirit enter in, and you are now tasting the first fruit of that Spirit, which is love."

“O,” said Louisa, “I am so happy, to think that the strife is past; it seems to me, Mr. Jones, that I could call upon everything that hath breath to praise the Lord.”

Mr. Jones told her, that this emotion was joy, the *second* fruit of the Spirit; and by reading the fifth chapter of Galatians, she would find what was the third, and fourth, and so on to the ninth. He told her, that while she allowed the Saviour the uppermost seat in her heart, all the fruits of his Spirit would abound in her, and be sweet unto her taste.

Mr. Jones talked some to me; but I didn't let him know how bad I felt. I can't help laughing to think I have told you Louisa's experience. Perhaps she would like to have me relate it for her at the Church-meeting, for she is to be baptized next Sabbath. I want you to write to us girls, before you get so *divine*, and *superb*, and *magnificent*, that you can't think of Linden.

Yours affectionately,

MARY.

LETTER VI.

DAISY TO MARY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—There can be no doubt, but that you are the same Mary Motley ; and I am glad of it, though I know you ought to be better, and so had I. How could you tell me so much about Louisa ? But it was all right ; I should have been sorry not to know just how it was, though it made me feel so bad.

Aunt Portman was getting me ready for my first party when your letter arrived. She said that a favorable first appearance was of “ *unspeakable* importance ;” and the mantua-maker said, “ O, certainly, everything depended on that—a failure here would be shocking.” So you may be sure, Mary, that I was feeling no little anxiety about myself, when your letter was brought in. Aunt told me that it was from Linden, and advised me not to read it, until the morrow, for it might put me out of spirits, and that would be disastrous beyond concep-

tion. But it was of no use to talk. I begged to be excused for a moment, and ran up stairs, sat down, and tore open the letter, began to read and to laugh; but presently changed my tune, and began to cry. I forgot the unspeakable importance of looking well at the party, and allowed my tears to chase each other, as though they were running a race. Aunt Portman came up, and knocked at the door, and I brushed them away with all haste; but tears will betray themselves, you know, and aunt was almost angry. She said, that it would take a whole half-day for my eyes to regain their lustre, and for my poor nose to get over being so sadly pinched. She said, that no young lady of taste ever cried so as to redden her nose, or dim her eyes. Beauty was sufficiently fleeting without crying it away. Josey wished Linden to the North Pole; and the mantua-maker thought that letters from the country were insufferable. But all this did not raise my spirits. I love Louisa dearly, and I felt as though she had separated herself from me as far as the east is from the west. I don't know why I

should feel so. It seems to me, that I have always tried to do right. Have I ever been selfish or unkind, Mary. Have I been careless and inattentive at Church, at the Sabbath school, and at the Bible class? It seems to me, that if I had wronged any one, I should be willing to make any restitution required. I would not mind doing a great deal, Mary, if I could only rid myself of this feeling of guilt. My aunt brought forward her pearls after the mantua-maker had arranged me in my new dress, which in their eyes was not a *thought* deficient in any thing.

Then Josephine and I were placed side by side before the mirror, and stood full half an hour admiring ourselves, and talking of the brilliant contrast. At the party I had but one thought, and that was my favorable first appearance. Josephine whispered to me several times, telling me to keep up my spirits, for they had inquired of her repeatedly the name of that little *Hebe*, and had declared, that I was perfectly enchanting. I never had such curious feelings before, Mary; such a desire to be seen and admired. Perhaps this is what

makes me feel so guilty. I ought to write aunt Julia about it ; but I know pretty well what she would say. Aunt Portman thinks it unfortunate that I have never learned to dance, and means to have me take private lessons. She seems to blame aunt Julia for neglecting my education ; but I am sure, Mary, that I am not so ignorant as many whom aunt calls "highly accomplished," and who are many years older than myself. I should be ashamed to hear such blunders in our "sewing circle," as I heard at the party last evening.

Aunt Julia should not be blamed. She has tried hard to make me wise and good, and did not object strongly to my attending the dancing-school. She only told me that dancing was a great temptation to vanity and self-love ; and said, that many young ladies had been ruined by their great love for this amusement.

I thought, Mary, that we should all find temptations enough *in* our way, without going abroad to seek them, so I gave up the dancing-school ; and was not sorry that poor Mr. Crocker went after his daughter

Susan, and by his exhortation and prayer, frightened the dancing-master away. I sometimes wish myself at Linden again, and always feel like crying, when I think of dear aunt Julia, there all alone ; but still there are reasons why I rather choose to be here. I cannot tell them, I am sure, and perhaps, should be ashamed to, if I could.

You will remember me to Mr. Jones, it is very kind of him not to forget me in his prayers ; and, Mary, perhaps *you* had better try to be a Christian. It will be easier for you than for me. I should be sorry to lose you ; but I know that it is very dangerous to live in sin. It would be hard for me to be a Christian now, but when I get back to Linden, with aunt Julia, and Mr. Jones, and Louisa, to help me, it will be easier.

Give my love to all the girls. I suppose that Ellen Bates has gone away to school. Louisa will try hard to make a Christian of her, they are so intimate. Write again, dear Mary. As ever, your friend,

DAISY.

LETTER VII.

LOUISA TO DAISY.

MY DEAR DAISY,—Mary Motley was so much afraid of answering your last letter, that she begged me to write for her. She says that you need some good advice, and it would look ridiculous for *her* to give it. You have not requested a letter from me, and perhaps would rather receive one from Mary; but I love you, dear Daisy, and feel so desirous of doing you good, that I will run the risk of appearing impertinent. You remember, Daisy, that morning when we stood under the elm tree upon the common, and talked about your going to B——; you said, that we could continue to love each other just the same as if you were here, that distance had nothing to do with hearts: but in your letter to Mary, you speak of *once* loving Louisa, and of being separated from her now, “as far as the east is from the west.” Is it because I have given my heart to the Saviour? Do you love me

less for that? I thought much of this after reading your letter to Mary, and something whispered to my heart that the stranger-like feeling might be the beginning of that "great gulf" spoken of in the Scripture. The thought cost me some tears, dear Daisy; and I prayed with all my heart, that God would not allow you to love me less, because I love Him. For how can we doubt the final separation between those who love the Lord, and those who love him not, when we see the beginning here? O, Daisy dear, it is not our Heavenly Father's will that drives us away in our wickedness; it is the free choice of our sinful hearts. You know that Louisa was once the favorite among the young people at Linden. But it is no longer so. They are not unkind to me. (It is true that some among them call me the "young saint," and such like names,—a small thing compared to what my Saviour endured for me.) But there is a coldness, and distance of manner, an effort to avoid my society, which is evident; and, I will confess, painful to my feelings. And why is it, Daisy?

I never loved my young friends as I do now. My anxiety for their present and eternal happiness is so great, that it often deprives me of sleep; but it is not *Louisa* whom they dislike; they do not shun *me*, Daisy; it is the "Friend of sinners," whom I have acknowledged as *my best* friend, and, is therefore, accounted a *rival*. They have a controversy with the Lord, dear Daisy, and where is it to end? They draw a dividing line between themselves and those who love Him, and every day of sin widens this breach; no wonder, then, that at the last it becomes a "great gulf," which cannot be passed.

Dear Daisy, shall I see you, and Mary, and Helen thus separated forever from all that is happy and holy? You have already drawn that dividing line. Your hearts are separated from those who seek the Lord, "as far as the east is from the west," and you are wandering farther and farther away.

My dear Daisy, can I bear to let you go? O, my heart grew sick when I read of your standing before the mirror with cousin Josephine, and admiring the "splen-

did contrast." You will not think me ill-natured, dear friend, if I ask you to look forward a little, and think of other contrasts. Compare yourself decked with pearls and costly array, to the same poor self wrapped in the winding-sheet, and moldering beneath the coffin lid. This would be an awful contrast; but not so awful as will be that seen by an assembled world, when the dead, small and great, will stand before God. What a contrast then between those who have loved Him, and those who loved this present world! But I will not believe, Daisy, that you can choose the paths of folly, reject your Saviour, and be found at last upon the left hand. You have no intention of that. But why will you grieve the Holy Spirit from your heart?—

"He who all your life has strove,
Wooed you to embrace His love."

I know very well that you would not treat an earthly friend as you do the Saviour. You would not wrong us, any one of us, without making immediate restitution. Yet you wrong Him knowingly. You violate His commandments, treat Him with

the coldest neglect, and open your heart to the most foolish of earthly love, while you close it against love so wonderful, and so free ; and yet you ask, Mary, what you have done ? Why you feel a weight of guilt upon your heart ? If you have ever been selfish and unkind ? No, Daisy, not as it regards your earthly friends. Have you ever been inattentive at Church or the Sabbath-school ? No, Daisy, you would not treat your pastor or teachers with disrespect. But how have you treated the Lord Jesus Christ ? Will you allow your own conscience to answer that question ? Go to your chamber, put all thoughts of your present vain pursuits far from your mind, bow meekly before your God, and ask, "Wherein have I robbed thee ?" Then listen while the Spirit answers. And if it shows you vile ingratitude, and a "heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," do not despair. The Lord Jesus Christ will take our hearts, sinful as they are, and all we have to do is to lay them at his feet.

Helen has gone away to school. She is already half-persuaded to be a Christian.

When shall I see her and you, dear Daisy, and Mary, altogether persuaded? In prayerful waiting for this, I remain your friend,

LOUISA.

LETTER VIII.

TO DAISY, FROM HER FATHER.

MY DEAR CHILD,—This letter must traverse the ocean before it reaches you; but the love that dictates these lines has fleeter wings. It seeks you, hour by hour, so that no ocean wave can roll between your father's heart and you. I have nothing left but you, my daughter; so I live to make you happy. You have, doubtless, before this time, left Linden, for a home with your Aunt Portman,—this will be decidedly for the best. I greatly admire your Aunt Julia; she very nearly resembles your mother, both in person and manner; but you could not there be fitted for the circle in which I wish you—not only to move but to *shine*. Your Aunt Portman mingles with good society, and knows what

is requisite for such a station. You may be guided by your Aunt Julia in all studies save those relating to fashionable life; but in those your Aunt Portman will, doubtless, be the best judge.

I am rapidly accumulating wealth for you, my Daisy, and I ask no reward for my toil but this, that I may find the idol of my heart worthy her father's love. With kind remembrances to your aunts and cousin,

I am, dear daughter,

Your affectionate father.

LETTER IX.

DAISY TO LOUISA.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am not so wicked as to love you less because you have become a Christian, but still I might appear cold and reserved, if I were to see you, for I should feel, Louisa, that you could no longer sympathize with me in my *Daisyism*, I suppose I must call it, for I know but little of other isms, and shall want to

know still less, if they are all troublesome like this. How is it, Louisa, that you, being one year older than myself, have settled into a character; while I am a poor reed, shaken by every wind.

Your letter found me all engrossed with the world. For two whole days I had not found a thought for anything but my *personal appearance*. Josephine had found what she called a splendid hat, with feathers to match; and I, of course, was not to be satisfied with merely an inferior one, though it might have formed a striking contrast. Aunt was deeply enlisted in the secret, and every milliner's shop in the city had been thrown into confusion. I had just lighted on azure blue, and had come home in raptures to compare it with Josey's scarlet, when lo! upon my dressing-table I saw a letter from Linden. For a moment, I felt ashamed that merely a letter from Aunt Julia's neighborhood should see me so feverish about so small a matter.

You might have spared me the pain of your shocking contrasts, Louisa—as Aunt Portman would say. They were not in

good taste. But I ought to be serious here. You will excuse me, if I laugh in the wrong place ; especially if I engage to cry out of season to make amends. The truth is, Louisa, I have trouble enough in trying to drive such thoughts from my mind. What need to make myself miserable with thoughts of the grave, the winding-sheet, and the moldering form beneath the coffin-lid ?

Aunt Portman does not believe that we shall be punished in the world to come merely for making ourselves happy in this. And, after all, Louisa, it is but little happiness that we get. Sometimes I think that if this is all of life, it is no such bad thing to die : not that I am willing or can even bear the thought of dying.

Your letter made me feel dreadful, Louisa, I must confess ; and I had more than half a mind to do as you told me ; but just as I was feeling the worst, a letter was brought me from father. He thinks it best for me to stay with Aunt Portman, and fit myself for—I don't know what—endless misery, perhaps. Father wishes me

to follow Aunt Julia's directions in everything, excepting that which pertains to fashionable life. I am to shine here, and my Aunt Portman is selected as the polisher.

I mean to visit Linden the ensuing winter, in spite of all opposition. I know that it will be considered a shocking waste of time, as I am just beginning to dance in public, and this is the season for balls; but I shall come and see my dear Aunt Julia, whom I love better than anybody else in the world.

I should be glad to receive a letter from you very often, dear Louisa; but please be a little less solemn, and I will be a little more serious if I can.

Your friend,

DAISY.

LETTER X.

TO DAISY, FROM HER AUNT JULIA.

MY DEAR DAISY,—A company of your young friends spent last evening with me, and Louisa tarried over night. She gave me your last letter to read, and entreated me to answer it. I recollect, dear, that I have written to you but one, and that a very short letter, since you have been at B——, and the reason is this: I have found no refuge from my deep anxiety for you, but in constantly committing you to the Lord. I have been afraid to speak, and almost to think, of the snares laid for your inexperienced feet; and even now, my dear Daisy, I am at a loss what to say. You complain to Louisa that you are without *character*, and find yourself as a reed shaken by the wind; and yet two years ago, my Daisy, you gave promise of a character established upon the sure basis of right principle. You were not afraid to meet present responsibilities, and thought it no hard thing, that, as an immortal being,

you were called to bear them, and to act well your part. You felt yourself possessed of a present power of doing good, of enjoying and imparting happiness. How is it, my dear, that you have become such a pitiable object, "a reed shaken by the wind?" I will tell you, Daisy; you are mocking the wants of your spirit by forcing it to *feed* upon the wind. In other days, before you were taught to make that poor spirit the slave of your meaner wants, it was allowed to think and act, and form its character for eternity. But now you speak of yourself as without a character; no, my dear, your spirit is suffering a sad change. It will soon stand out before the world, stamped with a *new* character, and sealed, perhaps, for time and for eternity.

You may think me severe; but, Daisy, you are no longer a child. You are now fifteen years of age, and God has endowed you with capacities far above your years. But how are you hiding the talents committed to your trust!

In your first letter to me, you spoke of difficulties in the way of prayer: and now,

Daisy, allow me to ask if you were really sincere in asking my guidance in this thing? There was a contest between your heart and the Holy Spirit. There was something demanded which you would not yield. You know what it was. Perhaps you saw that the time had come, when you must either cast off fear and restrain prayer, or obey the first and great commandment. But, whatever it might be, my dear child, it was plain to your understanding; for the path of divine requirement is made plain, even to the fool and the way-faring man. Was it honest, then, to ask Aunt Julia what you should do? You know well, Daisy, that but two ways were open to you—the way of obedience and life, or disobedience and death; the narrow way of wisdom and peace, or the broad, frequented road. You were not ready to make choice of the former, and you feared a deliberate choice of the latter. So your deceitful heart dictated a middle course: you would delay a decision by asking advice; you would avoid the great question at issue between God and your

immortal soul, by coming to him, not in the deep, sincere language of the heart, but merely with a lip service, declining all controversy. What dreadful mockery this ! I would not, my dear Daisy, thus lay open to you the deep hypocrisy of the human heart, if I could in any way persuade you to examine yourself. But you seem to think that your only chance of happiness, of rest from an accusing conscience, is in keeping your eyes securely closed. You seem to desire the spirit of slumber, and are even trying to lull yourself with the unbelief of another : “ Aunt Portman does not believe that God will punish us for making ourselves *happy*.” Neither does Aunt Julia, my dear child ; but she believes, from God’s own word, that the poor heart can bring punishment on itself forever and ever.

You know, Daisy, that the Prodigal Son had a rich inheritance in his father’s house ; but he wandered from his home, and spent all his goodly substance in riotous living ; then came the misery of starvation, and the disgusting companionship with

swine. Did the kind father appoint his son to such a miserable lot, or was it the dregs of his chosen cup? You know well that the father's heart yearned over that profligate son, and with pitying tenderness welcomed his return.

Thus is it with human hearts, my child. Our Heavenly Father seeks to secure our eternal happiness by fixing our love in him. He urges us, by the strongest motives, to make his love an early choice. Little children are invited to come. He would make sure of the *lambs*, before they are exposed to ravening wolves. But if that best period is passed, the sceptre of mercy is still extended. He calls himself our father, and offers to be the guide of our youth. We may turn away and follow objects of our own choice, we may run into by and forbidden paths, but his Spirit pursues us, a thousand motives are urged to lure us back, and when a wanderer turns at the voice of that Spirit's reproof, the same love welcomes his return, the angels rejoice over him, and he is conducted into the green pastures, and by the still waters of peace.

But, my dear Daisy, what of those who close their eyes, and ears, and rush madly on? One earthly hope proves a shadow, and they fly to another, and another. One reed, upon which they lean, pierces them through with many sorrows; but they solace their hearts with earthly love, make the world a cure for its own woes, and ask no higher support. By-and-by the world passes away; its pleasures pall, its flowers wither, its hopes decay,—and where is the heart's love then? The spirit enters upon untried scenes. Is it fitted now to pour out a full tide of affection upon the holy and the pure?

No, my Daisy, the soul must be *educated* for heaven, or it has no portion there; and if found at last in the dark region of despair, where every object repels its love, and sends back that love to gnaw like an undying worm forever and ever, that soul will know itself sealed to such a doom by its *own free choice*.

Will you think of this, Daisy? Will you do more, my dear child; will you turn at once from these dangerous paths and give

your heart to God? If you could see your friend Louisa, I am sure that you would think your present happiness but a poor thing compared to that which beams from her loving eyes, and shines out in all her actions. She shows the blessed effect of Divine love upon her heart, by an ardent interest in the welfare of her young friends. She seems willing to bear the reproach of Christ; and, I have no doubt, will soon see the reward of her faithful efforts, in the conversion of many. There is deep seriousness and fixed attention among the members of Mr. Jones's Bible class, and the influence is felt in the Sabbath school. How much it would rejoice our hearts to see these precious lambs safely inclosed in the Redeemer's fold! I believe that we shall see many of them thus blessed before the winter is gone. But O! to think that my dear Daisy is so exposed to the power of him who goeth about seeking whom he may devour; and so willing to be led captive at his will! I will not say that I can do but little for you, my dear child, while I can pray: and I am not alone here,—Mr. Jones and Louisa are

united with me in this one thing which I have so ardently desired of the Lord; namely, the conversion of your precious soul to Him.

Come and see me as you have promised, and believe me, as ever, your affectionate

AUNT JULIA.

LETTER XI.

MARTHA TO JULIA.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have only time to write a line. My dear brother Frederick, who we flattered ourselves was recovering, has returned in fixed consumption. The poor, dear boy had heard his sister Martha discourse so pathetically on the beauties of nature, as displaying the great power and goodness of God, that he expected to find me competent to teach him the way to be saved. Ah, Julia dear, I see that my religion, though it can well bear the moonlight of the prairie, must wither in the sunlight of eternity. It is of no use to tell poor Fred, that God is love, and very

merciful ; he says, that he wants to *feel* that love in his heart, and to know that His mercy is extended to him. And of what avail is it, that I can talk so elegantly of the love of God to me, if I can say nothing of my love for Him? My brother reasons very justly, that love so infinite deserves love in return, and his restless anxiety fills me with unutterable distress. What shall I do, Julia? How can my dear brother know that his sins are forgiven, for nothing else will satisfy him now?

What can impart to him those bright anticipations of home, that gladdened your father upon his bed of death? I will confess *to you* my firm belief, that I have never entered by the door into the sheep-fold, and I am not willing to aid the dying in climbing up some other way. Write immediately. I pledge myself to follow your advice. With intense anxiety, your friend,
MARTHA.

LETTER XII.

JULIA TO MARTHA.

MY DEAR MARTHA,—Why should three weeks of most precious time be wasted in waiting for *my* advice? What if I could write a sermon for you equal in eloquent power to those of Paul, would the object of your heart's desire be thus gained? I believe, Martha, that it would not. God has returned your brother to you for the two-fold purpose of securing *his* salvation, and *your own*. By this most painful test, He shows you the ground of your hopes; how the poor, shrinking spirit refuses to tread the only path you have learned to walk. Why should you wait to hear from me, Martha, when the Spirit of God urges you to enter by the door, that you may be able to guide your brother in the *only true way*. You will confess to *me* that you have never entered by the door into the sheep-fold. Your confession must be broader than that, dear Martha, or it will avail you nothing. You

should confess to God the deep guilt of rejecting the only Door of hope, and seeking to climb up some other way. Your brother, *all* with whom you associate should see your rejection of every foundation but that laid in Zion for the hope of the guilty.

You have pledged yourself to follow my advice. It is this. Make no delay, but come to God through Jesus Christ; submit *yourself*, fully and without reserve, to Him. Do this, and you will be able from your own experience to tell your dear brother how a sinner knows his sins forgiven. You will understand for yourself, Martha, the nature of that peace, which is the first-fruit of the Spirit. Your brother Frederic can do the same. He has no need to wait for Martha, to drink at the fountain, while he is perishing of thirst. There is but one way—repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; this, and this *only* secures to us an heirship to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. May it be yours!

Your affectionate friend,

JULIA.

LETTER XIII.

DAISY'S FATHER TO JULIA.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I am not ungrateful for the tender care bestowed by you upon my dear child, and were she to be educated for the quiet of domestic life alone, I could not find for her a more competent teacher than yourself. I know that you would not fail in making her a dutiful child, an intelligent, interesting companion, a noble-minded, conscientious woman, and an efficient house-keeper. Such was her mother,—a woman that could make home second only to Paradise! I have no objection either to that sweet, dreamy piety, whose ideal love only added purity and fervency to that which is real. But you know, my dear sister, that a blight has come over my paradise. Home is no longer a magic name, and henceforth I must live in other scenes. If there is anything of happiness left in this frost-bitten world, I must seek it out, and make it secure.

Daisy is beautiful and sprightly. I shall have wealth for her, and henceforth our residence must be in the city. I cannot wish her to be excluded from society, or that she should mingle with any but the best; and my ambition requires her to be among the most attractive, even there. For this reason, and this *only*, have I confided her to my sister Portman's care; but still, knowing that woman cannot always shine as a star of the first magnitude in the fashionable horizon, I would have her qualified for other spheres of action. May I hope, that in all things relating to moral culture and domestic education, my sister Julia will be to her as she has long been—a counselor and guide? I hope in one year more (at farthest) to thank you in person for your kindness to Daisy; in the mean time believe me your obliged and grateful brother.

H. E. G.

LETTER XIV.

JULIA'S ANSWER.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Most gladly would I retain my post as counselor and guide to our dear Daisy, but I ought in good faith to inform you, that my counsel must greatly interfere with her present pursuits, and my guidance (if followed) would lead her at once and forever from the paths of your choice ; for you must know, my brother, that what is to you only a very “pleasant ideal-ity,” is to *me* real, far beyond anything pertaining to the present life ; and I feel myself under obligations the most sacred to treat it as a reality in my intercourse with all. This reality does not appear to me invested with the rainbow-tinted drapery of *dreams*. I see it as the spirit's pathway home ; and no pathway of velvet softness either, though it brightens more and more, and leads to perfect day. It is a way cast up in the wilderness for the ransomed of the Lord ; and because the world's wilder-

ness affords no water for the spirit's thirst, and no manna of itself for her perishing want, she is forbidden to tarry in all this plain, or to gather any garlands from these "frost-bitten" bowers. So, then, my brother, if Mrs. Portman succeeds in making poor Daisy a star in the world's firmament, I have but little hope that she will deck my crown of rejoicing in the day when the Saviour makes up his jewels. The flashing meteors of the present world, which borrow their fleeting brightness from earth's tinsel, have their doom assigned: "Wandering stars are they, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

And this is the lot chosen for my Daisy, the child of many prayers. Yet I had hoped to see her a far different light in this benighted world. I had hoped, my brother, that she would place her affections on things above, before the world should become to her, what it is to you—"frost-bitten," and seared by mildew and blight. Shall it not be so? Permit me to urge my deep love for your child, and the memory of her mother in heaven; and by these

conjure you not to compel our Daisy to wring out eternal poverty from the world's wealth, to drink the cup of bitter dregs, to sow the wind and reap the whirlwind,—for such is the labor, and such the reward of those who wander from God, the fountain of living waters, and hew to themselves broken cisterns which hold no water.

Your affectionate sister,

JULIA H. WOOD.

LETTER XV.

LOUISA TO HELEN BATES.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I felt very sure that Mr. Jones would not pass through the town of T——m without giving you a call; and I was glad, Helen, that you treated him with so much frankness. It is but just that his pupils should show him this attention, for where could we find one more deeply interested for us? You were not afraid of him, Helen, as you used to be—afraid that he would urge you to seek the Lord in your youth, and I am glad of that.

This shyness of manners must deeply wound the feelings of those who are seeking our best good, and it is greatly in the way of our own happiness.

Mr. Jones thinks, dear Helen, that your sins are forgiven; but he says that you should consider your evidence small, compared to mine. Do you know, dear, that to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much? You were always a quiet, conscientious girl, Helen. Everything but your natural heart has always been on the side of religion; so your change was not from thick darkness to light, but from twilight to morning dawn.

I think, Helen, dear, that a work of grace was begun in your heart long ago, and you did not oppose that work as many do. Your principal guilt was in refusing to give the Saviour your *whole* heart. But you have seen this wrong, and now desire, above all things, to be his entirely.

Mr. Jones says that you need more *faith*; and I heard him tell Timothy Saunders last week that he must believe in the very first light received,—no matter how faint that

light, if he felt the slightest emotion of love towards God and his people, he ought to believe in it, and rejoice over it,—and faith and gratitude would increase the light of love. Timothy, and most of the Bible-class members are now serious inquirers. Henry is still indifferent, and I fear that he will become hardened in sin. The case with poor Henry is this: a number of young men from Harebell Plains came over and proposed a ball for New-Year's eve; but such is Mr. Jones's influence among the young people, that the proposal was not warmly seconded here. I am sorry to say, however, that Henry, though he had before manifested some seriousness, and gave respectful attention to Mr. Jones's instructions, now took sides against him, and tried, by every means, to enlist the Bible class for the ball. Mr. Jones said but little; but we knew very well that the case was submitted to God, and had not many fears for the issue. Only three of the class professed themselves determined to go: these were, Henry, Mary Motley, and Emīna Cleaveland.

In the mean time, Mary wrote to Daisy and begged her to be present, and as there was a ball in question, Mrs. Portman's leave was easily obtained. A week before New-Year's, Daisy arrived, and I saw her first in the Bible class. I am sure that I was not the only one who had to endure the heart-ache on that day. Mr. Jones saw the great change in Daisy, and sighed deeply, as she seated herself among us. There was such a listlessness of manner, such an evident desire to attract attention and secure admiration even in the house of God, such a profusion of ornament and costly apparel, that I could not help asking myself, Is this our pretty, simple-hearted Daisy?

O, Helen, dear, I know that the love of the world must be enmity to God. I saw Daisy several times during the week ; but I could see but little resemblance to the Daisy of former times. It is true that she seemed very affectionate towards her Aunt Julia, and somewhat afflicted that she should be the cause of so much grief and anxiety ; but her love of pleasure was superior to

every other love, and she kept herself busily employed in preparing for the ball. Towards the last of the week, she seemed absorbed with the pleasurable thought that she should outshine Linden and Harebell Plains.

Another Sabbath came, and we were all in the class again. But Daisy could not hide the struggle going on in her heart. I understand it all, Helen : Daisy had been the subject of almost incessant prayer during that last week, and she was now contending with the Spirit of God ; and in this foolish contention she was not alone.

After the close of the Sabbath school, Mr. Jones requested his class to tarry. When we were quite alone, he spoke to each separately of the great danger attendant on trifling with our day of grace. He told us, that with some of his class the decisions of that Sabbath were of awful importance. He then spoke plainly and pointedly of the amusement proposed for the next evening—of its character, and tendency ; and then asked, solemnly, who among us were resolved to go. You may

judge of our feelings, dear Helen, when Henry Saunders, Daisy, and Emma Cleavland rose to their feet. Mary Motley sat next me. I threw my arms around her, and, in spite of all that I could do, burst into tears. Mr. Jones sat down and covered his face with his hands, and all but Timothy, Mary, and myself left the room. We sat in silence for some time; Mary was trembling and weeping in my arms. When Mr. Jones knelt down to pray, I kept my arms around Mary, and found, to my great joy, that she could not refuse to bow with us before the Lord. When we arose, she told Mr. Jones that she should not go to the ball, and she meant from that hour to seek an interest in Christ. This was a balm to his wounded feelings, and he exhorted Timothy and me with tears to continue instant in prayer.

I began, by this time, Helen, to feel that it was no small thing to be a laborer in the vineyard of the Lord; but how honored I felt in being permitted to do and bear something for Him, who had borne the cross and endured the shame for me!

I spent the next day with Daisy and her aunt. Poor Daisy seemed desperate, and at times impatient with our "solemn silence," as she called it; I think, however, that it was not *silence* which so disturbed her feelings,—she knew well that we were hourly presenting her case to God.

Mr. Jones had engaged some pious persons in our immediate neighborhood to meet on New-Year's eve at Miss Julia Wood's, and in view of circumstances so painfully interesting to every Christian heart, to spend the last hours of the closing year in prayer. At eight o'clock, quite a number had assembled. Daisy softly opened the door, and, beckoning me out, begged to know if I would go up stairs and assist her for a few moments. The poor girl *needed* my assistance, for her trembling hands seemed unable to perform the work assigned them. I arranged her long hair in graceful curls, and with a heavy heart festooned her satin frock with artificial flowers. I then placed her before the mirror, that she might see her outward adorning complete. She tried to smile, but

seemed dissatisfied with her appearance. "I look so worn and sad," said she; "a plague upon country balls. I think, Louisa, that there is an appropriate time for everything; when one day in seven is set apart for religious contemplations, what need is there to force religion into every day of the week!" I did not think it necessary to make any reply to this, for I knew very well that her own conscience had long instructed her as to the reason why religion should be made the business of every-day life. I wanted to be with the rational, happy company below; but, as I opened the door to depart, the voice of their singing came full and clear upon us. The words were these:—

"He, who all your lives has strove,
Woodyou to embrace his love;
Will ye not his grace receive?
Will ye still refuse to live?
Why, ye long-sought sinners, why
Will ye cross his love and die?"

Daisy's pale cheek grew still paler, and she stood gazing at me as though nailed to the spot. I entreated her to go down stairs

with me, just till Henry and Emma should come. She objected, on account of her dress; but I threw a large shawl over her, and drew her along. If you had been present at our meeting that evening, dear Helen, you would have wondered at the power of faith, and would have thought with me that the young Christian should lose no time in possessing himself of such a shield. At a little past nine, a sleigh drove up, and the door-bell rang. I knew Henry's voice as he inquired for Daisy, and opening the door of our prayer-room, with a feeling of Christian triumph, I pointed her out. Henry and Emma both saw her there, decked in gold, and pearls, and costly array, but bowing as a penitent before the Lord, and seeking pardon in silent prayer and bitter tears. Emma was quite overcome, and allowed me to take off her hood and cloak, and lead her into the room, where she soon found a place beside Daisy, at the foot of the cross. But Henry hardened his heart, and drove away. I hope, dear Helen, that your next vacation will be spent at home. We are having such a

happy winter. Miss Martha Vernon, whose family moved from the town some seven or eight years since, is now visiting Miss Julia Wood. She was at the teachers' meeting last evening, and gave us an interesting account of the sickness, conversion, and happy death of her brother Frederic. She is now a very devoted Christian, though she told us that she had known the Saviour's love for only a few months. The Saviour's love, dear Helen! what a love is that! how it sends us away from self to seek and save the lost! Well may we exclaim, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon *us*, that we should be called the sons of God!"

Daisy is fully resolved to give up all for Christ. She has written a long letter to her aunt Portman, and received one in return, accusing her of ingratitude and disobedience. This is a trial to poor Daisy. She is unwilling to offend her father; but she feels now that the Saviour has a greater claim upon her love, than either father or mother. Write soon dear Helen.

Your friend,

LOUISA.

LETTER XVI.

JOSEPHINE TO DAISY.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I could scarcely believe mamma, when she told me that you had come to be such a little fool. You must be tired of your new character by this time; so I write to tell you, that we will say no more about it, if you will only come back. Indeed, Daisy, you ought to come, for mamma says, that there is a command in the Bible, for children to obey parents. I never saw nor heard of it; but then if there is, and you are a Christian, it would be very convenient for you to obey it, to throw the whole blame of wrong doing upon your father, (mother didn't tell me that, I *inferred* it.) I want you to come back, coz, for I hate everybody and everything but you, and should in all probability hate you too, only that your style of beauty forms such a splendid *contrast* to mine. That elegant Ostenello asked me last evening if the star had blended with the rainbow, or why it

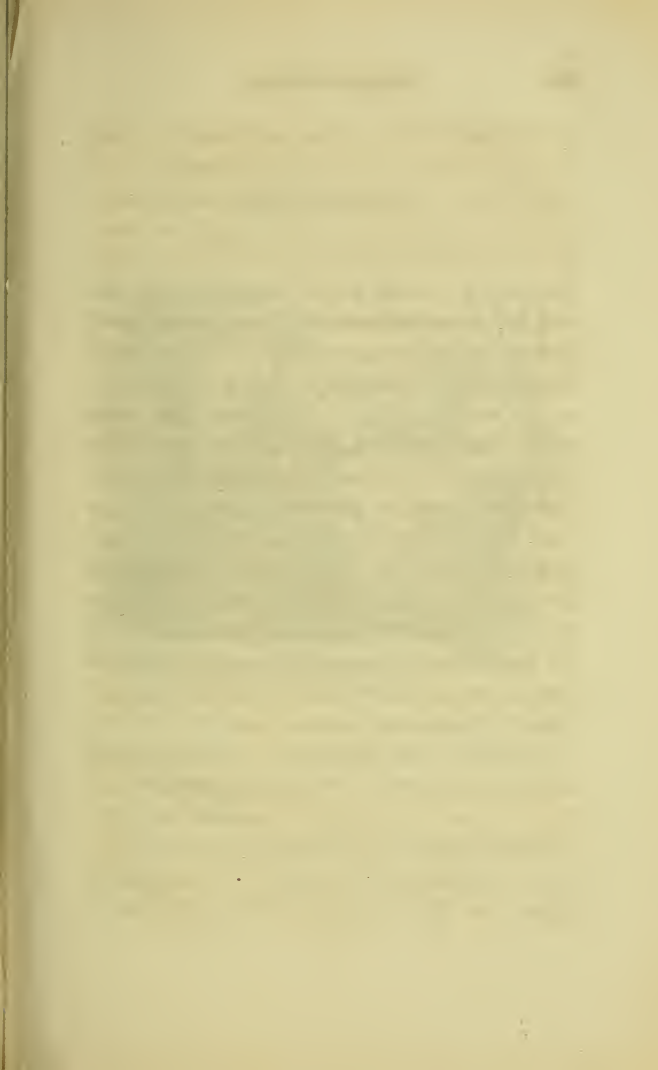
was no longer visible. I told him that the star had entered a cloud ; but mother, who is sorely vexed with you, told him outright, that you had gone to Linden, and turned Methodist. I thought that he would have died of laughter. He said, that you would make a demure little saint ; and he would give the world to see you in this character. I have taken up sleeping with mamma since you went away. She says, that I shall be the death of her ; but it is no use to think of my lying awake alone.

If you come back now, Daisy, people will think that you got up this religious farce for a joke. The Ellenwoods are to give a splendid party next week, we received cards this morning ; and something more I must tell you. Your father is on his way home. In your letter to mother, you said that he was the subject of your daily prayers, and you believed that God was able to turn his heart from the love of this vain world. Anybody would think that you had been to Church twice a Sunday ever since you were born to have learned so much preaching ; but you ought to know, that

nobody but a bishop has a right to talk in this way. Guess your father would give more for your obedience than your prayers, you little hypocrite. As for my visiting Linden, that is out of the question. My constitution would never endure a week of Sundays. I never told you, Daisy, what makes me so nervous, and afraid to stay alone; but I will now, if you will promise not to tell. I have a notion that I shall die suddenly; there is a strange, heavy beating about my heart after dancing, and a faintness that frightens me half to death: won't you come, Daisy? If anything should happen in that way, it would be shocking for mamma; but she would have somebody to love if you were here; and then, perhaps, we might, Daisy, talk about religious matters when I feel so gloomy, and I might come to be less afraid of death.

Come to the Ellenwoods' party. They are religious people, you know; and you will not be obliged to dance, unless you choose. With much love, I remain your

JOSEPHINE.





LETTER XVII.

DAISY'S ANSWER.

MY DEAR COUSIN JOSEPHINE,—In reading your Bible, you will find that I am not the first person who has been accounted a fool for Christ's sake. The wise and good of other days, counted such reproach as a small matter; then, of course, a poor, weak child like me, should not be offended; and since I have found such pure pleasure, dear Josephine, in doing the will of my Heavenly Father, I have no feelings but those of tender pity for the hearts that go astray from Him. There is a command in the Bible to children; you will find it in Eph. vi, 1: "Children, obey your parents *in the Lord*, for this is right." And I am happy to tell you, Josephine, that it will not, henceforth, be necessary to disobey God in order to obey my father.

The Lord has heard the voice of my supplication. My father is with us now, very feeble in health it is true, but in every

other respect greatly changed for the better. I only prayed for his conversion, and left the means with God. He found it necessary to bring my dear father to the very gates of death, and to hold him there long enough to see the past and the future ; and he has told us how he felt, when standing upon the verge of time. His past life seemed like a bubble, which his spirit had used as a toy. He had freighted this bubble with the priceless wealth of an immortal soul, and now it was about to be launched upon the broad ocean of eternity, where it would quickly burst, and its treasure be lost. In his distress he cried unto the Lord for a longer space, that he might redeem the past. His prayer was heard, and he is now laying up a treasure in heaven : but while he sorrows over the time so foolishly wasted, he rejoices greatly, that I have chosen the path of peace in my youth ; and, Josephine, dear, it is a path of peace. I have known something of the same tormenting fear that drives sleep from your pillow. You must be at peace with God, dear cousin. Give your poor, beating heart to

Him, and see how safe you will feel when it is in his holy keeping. Death might then come at any watch. Its heart strings might suddenly be snapped asunder, but the heart's *treasure* would be secure, and all would be well.

I cannot come to the Ellenwood party, dear Josey; it would be such a *mean* pleasure to me now; and, I doubt not, but that it would be more *pain* than pleasure; for since I have come to love the Saviour, it grieves me to see people wasting time so foolishly. I would gladly do them good; but know that I cannot make them happy by eating with them the evil fruits of unrighteousness, envyings, hatred, variance, wrath, emulation, strife, &c.; but I can make myself happy and forever blest by winning them to taste with me the peaceable fruits of the Holy Spirit, of which love is the first:—

“My passions hold a pleasing reign,
When love inspires my breast,—
Love, the divinest of the train,
The sov'reign of the rest.

"This is the grace must live and sing,
When faith and hope shall cease,
And sound from every joyful string
Through all the realms of bliss.

"Sink down, ye separating hills;
Let sin and death remove;
'Tis love that drives my chariot wheels,
And death must yield to love."

I want you, and your dear mother, to come and taste with us, and see that the Lord is good. Father and aunt Julia join in this heart-felt desire. Your affectionate cousin.

DAISY.

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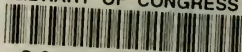


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